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## THE IDEA OF THE HOME.

BY MAY WRIGHT SEWALL.

The phrase *Ideal Home* is often on our lips in these late days, and of the *Ideal Home* the world has heard much within the last century. Yet this institution—neither defined in dictionary, explained in cyclopædia, nor as yet elaborated by any school of metaphysicians—is apparently not dependent on latitude, longitude, or situation, is equally indifferent to size, surroundings, and interior equipments, and is not less variable in its occupants than in its furnishings. Is bewilderment not indeed justifiable? And may not one well inquire, What, after all, *is* an *Ideal Home*?

The home may, perhaps, be defined the meeting-place of the family, the form or sphere under which these abstract relations exist and manifest themselves. An ideal used, as in this instance, synonymously with model, means the perfect realization of an idea, or the idea itself embodied in tangible form. So, to study the ideas which together constitute the home, and to discover the central idea which dominates it, we must discover the ideas underlying the family relations.

To us here and now the family, in its germinal form, means one man and one woman leagued together—indissolubly leagued for life—against the world. But it is certain that to penetrate to the idea of the family we must study its earlier and less perfect incorporations; for even now the idea of the family germ above mentioned is realized but among a fractional part of the earth's inhabitants.

Unthinking people are accustomed to assume that the patriarchal form of government was the first form, and that this originated in, and was an extension and continuance of, the family. This assumption is based upon another assumption: viz., That the family is itself an immediate creation. But all tradition, archæological and prehistoric research, as well as the philosophical analysis of History, tend to show that Humanity was created not *in* institutions, but with a capacity for forming institutions, and that the germinal family as *we* know it, far from being the initia-

tive institution of humanity, is rather the condition of its development, and also its final, its finest, and yet unripened fruit.

The historical review of the form is necessary to the analysis of the idea of the family ; but the review shall here be very brief. The most palpable object of the family, and the first, indeed, the only one recognized by Oriental peoples, was reproduction. This result was capable of being secured through any mingling of the sexes ; and historical testimony establishes the following as the order in which various modes have followed one another: 1. Promiscuity. 2. Polyandry and Polygamy (or Polygyny), each unlimited. 3. Polyandry and Polygamy, each under certain limitations. 4. Monogamy. The first form rests on a basis of simple animalism, and has existed only when and where humanity has not developed a consciousness of continued identity, and the consequent idea of permanence, in individual relations. This has never been practiced by any race sufficiently developed to assign reasons for its customs. Polyandry, which is that form of family based on plurality of husbands, has obtained among many peoples, and has endured over great periods of time. Some of the most cultivated branches of the Aryan race, including the Greek, admit the form to have prevailed among them in their earlier historic stage. It was not unknown among the early Egyptians, the Basques, the Britons, the Malays, the Hindoos, and the American Indians, and it yet remains the established form of family life among thirty millions of the inhabitants of Central Asia, and is not limited to these Thibetans. Among ancient authors, Aristotle and Herodotus inform us of the system of Polyandry. Among modern writers, those who have treated this subject with most intelligence and calmness are Mr. Herbert Spencer, in "*Principles of Sociology*"; Lecky, in his "*History of European Morals*"; Mr. McLennan, in "*Primitive Marriage*"; and Mr. Wilson, in his "*Lands of Snow*."

This, which, next to promiscuity, is the most revolting form of family existence, finds defenders only among nations so immature as not to have developed a belief in possible female chastity ; it is a form always attended by a manhood submerged in unnatural crimes. Polyandry explains, and tries to justify itself, on two grounds: First, on the necessary uncertainty of fatherhood, which renders it unsafe to calculate descent in the male line, and on the equally necessary certainty of maternity, and the consequent in-

fallible accuracy with which ancestry, through the female line, can be traced. As a second excuse it asserts that the creative function is that in which resides the most, and the most intensely, selfish form of affection; and that a positive knowledge of their real offspring would unfit men for their duties, which, it must be remembered, in the semi-civilized life which permits Polyandry are *always* attended by danger, and often rewarded by violent death. Even thus debased, we see the human heart prophesies the intensity of paternal tenderness, and fears that it would be too much softened for its duties should its sweet flavor once be tasted in its entirety through a knowledge of its real object. Under Polyandry, woman is the mistress—the head of the family; it is her family name that is transmitted; the female children are the inheritors, and the male children are but moderately portioned. These odd facts are an overwhelming refutation of the plausible statement so frequently made—that the civilization of a people may be measured by the relative place of woman. This is one of those generalities whose glitter blinds the eye to its untruth. In the degree to which individual freedom is recognized, and to which justice and equality regulate material relations, does civilization exist. Polygamy (or Polygyny), the reverse of Polyandry, unlike the latter, is a practice characterizing southern countries, and maintained by sensual rather than by stoical peoples. With its introduction came the demand for female chastity and an unlimited permit to male indulgence. This form of the family is accompanied by male supremacy in the household; by a continuance of the father's name, and of that only, in the male line. Where Polygamy exists in its purity, female children do not take any second or family name, and have no share in the inheritance.

Polygamy among the peoples first practicing it was maintained on the assumption that the mother had no essential relation to the child; that qualities were not transmitted through female ancestry, nor continued in the female line; that parenthood was an exclusive unshared function of men, and that women are, as a quaint old author expresses it, "parents but by courtesy." This idea rested upon the belief, universal among some early peoples, and finding defenders in the English tongue as late as the last century, that the seed of the race is with man alone; that woman is no

more than a repository provided for it during its period of secret development. She is but the soil, contributing no more and no differently to the character of the child born of her, no more determining that character, than the earth contributes to or determines the different natures of oak, maple, strawberry, and bean which spring from seeds sown upon its soil. In Polyandry we see that a conviction of woman's inevitable frailty and a stoical desire to escape the pain and burdens incident to natural affection, and a cognition of its legitimate objects, and in Polygamy that a sensual temperament and a false science, continued, if indeed they did not originate, these revolting forms of family existence. But, even under these forms, the unfolding spirit of man, struggling with the coarser instincts which acted as a check, and yet, without doubt, as a salutary check upon its development, was unconsciously striving to realize these underlying ideas of family and home which it had not yet recognized.

I have invited momentary attention to this outline of the forms of family life preceding that form with which we are acquainted, in order to prepare our minds for regarding the home as susceptible of modifications, and for the labor of separating that which in the idea of the home is transitory from that which in its idea is essential, and therefore abiding. As humanity recognized permanence a requisite element of power, the desire for permanence of family ties grew, and finally upon this condition of permanence the monogamic family arose. But the idea of family permanence cannot be grasped until the imagination has anticipated the fact, later established by scientific observation—viz., that the qualities of both lines of ancestry are alike transmitted to offspring. As corollaries of this discovery, Law proclaims that inheritance shall be reckoned in both maternal and paternal lines; and Society says that she will hold parents responsible for their children until they shall have reached the age of individual accountability.

So we shall say that permanence is one factor in the complex idea of the home; it is, however, a factor recognized by many minds before there is any intellectual perception of its tremendous consequences. At this stage the common interests of the family, recognized as conditioned upon permanence, are chiefly material: viz., common interest in food and in shelter. This

may be called the Gaelic stage of development, since the two Gaelic names for *family* signify, first, *the persons who eat together*; second, *the persons having a common residence*. The monogamic family was established in leading nations prior to Christianity; but Christianity, by changing what had hitherto been a vague fancy, or an intermittent hope of immortality, into a conviction of its certainty and its universality, confirmed the monogamic form of family life, and dignified inestimably the aspect of parenthood. Another influence of the Christianity of the Middle Ages upon the home will be discussed later. So soon as a people, or a single family group, have reached that degree of civilization and consequent possession in which their whole strength and their whole time are no longer consumed in maintaining the shelter above their heads and procuring necessary food—then, if the family relations are to continue, the family must grow into a deeper significance. The Gaelic definition no longer suffices. The family must now mean those persons who, besides eating together the bread that perisheth, eat also together the divine manna; those persons who, besides sharing together the common shelter of thatch and shingle, also consciously share the protection of the Spirit's dome. Shall we then add to permanence, as another underlying idea of the home, a consciousness on the part of its inmates that they are all related by sympathy and effort to common interests? Emerson says: "Any other affection between men than this geometric one of relation to the same thing is a mere mush of materialism." This fine, clear phrase enables us to name the relations existing in many nominal homes, which will prevent them from ever being homes after the spirit of that sweet term. In homes where the wives regard their husbands simply as "good providers," and where the husbands value the wives only as "notable housekeepers," where "bed and board" are the only meeting-grounds, there is indeed a mere, a pitiful "mush of materialism." We all know such homes; and in the modern family, where, to maintain the complicated style of living, every one is cumbered with much serving, in order to resist this tendency towards mere materialism, we must be willing to recognize and to name the danger. We would not, however, speak with contempt of the material appointments of a home. "Bed and board" are, indeed, important factors, since the health of its

inmates must always be one element in the ideal home, and this is preserved, if not indeed originally secured, by the rule of a wise, chaste, and vigilant temperance in the material relations.

The participation of all members of a family in immaterial interests is made possible only by an approximately equal culture of its heads, and by a culture of both extraneous to their respective lines of work. If we can imagine a blacksmith, for instance, who has absolutely no knowledge concerning anything outside his shop, with a wife who knows nothing but how to scrub, cook, and nurse; when said blacksmith returns, after his day's work, to his home, I see no alternative, if any communication take place between them, but for husband and wife to exchange the day's labors; when each has imparted a rehearsal of his labors and their results, interflow of thought is at an end, and both must have become doubly wearied.

Do we not know families whose home conversation is almost limited to categorical question and answer concerning the performance of their separate tasks? Yet one idea at the root of the home is, that its inmates shall reciprocally vitalize one another's intellects, and expand one another's vision. Not long ago a lady said to me, in substance, the following: As matters are accounted in this world, our family has seen a great deal of trouble; but I cannot remember, and indeed I do not believe, that we ever sat down at table, not even when we were little children, that my mother did not suggest some great world subject, or, at least, some quite impersonal topic, and lead us all into talking about it. With the mother of this friend my acquaintance is slight; but I never shall think of her without reverence—the deep reverence due a woman who has not misused the hours when families sit at meat—precious hours which often afford the best, and sometimes the only, opportunity for the intellects of all to approach one another; the deep reverence due a woman who has not debased such hours to personal gossip, to fretful complaints concerning her domestic cares; to an enumeration of tradesmen's blunders and a repetition of servants' impertinences; to querulous questionings of a husband's affairs; to a rehearsal of children's mishaps, or to the reproof of their errors. Shall we not then add to the ideas of permanence, and the consciousness on the part of each member that all are related to common material interests,

the third idea that one function of the family is to quicken intellect and to direct it to problems of universal moment ?

So soon as we admit intellectual vigor and growth to be one factor in the idea of family life, another element proclaims itself necessary. The sole condition of unwarped intellectual vitality is freedom. As we recall the historic growth of the family, our first impulse is to reject freedom from our conception of domestic life ; we are inclined to say : " Instead of freedom's being essential to the idea of the family, the freedom of one individual is formally relinquished, and that of the other tacitly compromised when the family is formed." True, the family is a bondage of mutual obligations, but, also, it is true that the perfection with which each obligation is performed is (other things being equal) proportional to the degree to which individual liberty is observed, nourished, and revered. At this date all enlightened peoples begin to perceive that the tyranny based on physical strength and religious assumptions, formerly exercised by husbands, defeated the very ends that husbands most desired ; and to-day, among Aryan peoples, this form of tyranny in domestic life is exerted chiefly by husbands in the poorer and lower classes of society, while a more refined, but not less paralyzing, tyranny is in polite circles exercised by wives ; the latter form is now in our country hardly less common than the former, and is as much more dangerous as redress from it is more difficult. The wife of a brutal coal-heaver can take into court her bruised arms, broken clavicle, and black eye, as proofs of her husband's tyranny ; but the business and professional man, forced into a style of living which exceeds his means and violates his tastes, forced into an external conformity to creeds which he inwardly disavows, perhaps abhors, forced to yield the guidance and discipline of his children to systems with which he has no sympathy, forced to these sacrifices by the relentless will of an elegant wife—the sufferer can testify only by his sullen humor, gloomy countenance, and generally downcast and dispirited air, to the tyranny of which he is the hopeless victim. However, that both these forms of domestic tyranny are yet widespread does not disprove that freedom inheres in the idea of the family. How does freedom in the home affect intellectual vitality ? As the exhausted receiver of an air-pump to plant-life, so is the atmosphere of suspicion, hyper-



criticism, and restraint to intellectual. It is in the free home only that children unconsciously grow into possession of themselves—that real self-possession in which the unfolding, the application, and the enjoyment of their powers is possible. It is in the free home only that grown-up people use their faculties with ease. In the free home people utter their best word with no fear that it will be called an affectation; and such utterance of one's best word gives rise to a better thought. There only is the unpremeditated witticism spoken without terror lest it be distorted into bitterness. There only are mild philosophical generalizations stated with no danger of their being warped into mean, personal applications. Some of the laws governing intellectual activity are so subtle as to defy analysis, yet I believe it safe to assert that while occasionally an intellect is piqued into high effort by unbelief and criticism, as a rule mind is spurred to best endeavor and finest achievement by generous expectation. Under the comfortable consciousness that no cavil bickers about its boundaries, and that no ridicule awaits its flights, it will explore widely and soar high. I know a few young people who always talk their best and brightest before their parents (I am sorry to say I know *very* few who do this). I have two or three intimate friends among intellectual women who are always most brilliant in the presence of their husbands. Under the stimulus of a home atmosphere, and in the strength imparted by the confidence of friends, faculties work without effort and without friction. To analyze, explain, and illustrate the idea of freedom in a home, I should need to devote an entire paper to this branch of my subject. Attempting no such full discussion, I assume we all agree that freedom enters into the idea at the basis of family life. It must be added that great freedom in a home is made possible only by the accompaniment of great reserves. The home is not alone the place for the freest meeting of mind, for the frankest, sincerest, and the most unrestrained intercourse, but it provides for the strictest privacy and retirement of each individual. This provision is indeed the home's final seal of its respect for individual liberty.

The poetical substitutes for the word Home, *haven*, *retreat*, *refuge*, all figure another of the elemental ideas at the foundation of the family—viz., *Repose*. This idea, like that of privacy, is also conditioned on the idea of freedom. "Home is where a

man's washing and mending are done," says the modern court. "Home is where a man finds habitual lodgement," says the formal eighteenth century essayist. "Home is the sacred refuge of my soul," sings the religious poet. In these statements jurist, critic, and rhapsodist alike assert as inhering in the home the ideas of repose and refreshment. There, protected by privacy in freedom, one may lounge from one easy-chair to another, indifferent to posture and attitude. There one may stretch, yawn, shake off, play away, or sleep out fatigue. In the spiritual conditions of a real home similar repose for the soul will be provided. The harrying worries of the world drop at its threshold. There the tension of timidity, emulation, ambition, anxiety—of a hundred conflicting emotions and exhausting conditions—is removed, and the relaxed faculties in the attitude of unuse, or through conscious, fearless rising to the limit of their bent, find refreshment.

The true solvent for all the ideas thus far enumerated, for the recognition of common interests and the reverence for individual freedom, for intellectual stimulus, and for repose, the sentiment which secures and unites all these ideas, and which is also the guarantee of permanence, that idea which we have to underlie the monogamic family—this solvent is affection. The quality of that affection which justifies the establishment of a new family, the signs of its existence, the modes of its manifestation in family life, have been a matter of varying opinion and of warm discussion since the world first recognized love as the true sponsor of marriage. Here I have not time for even the briefest reviews of these theories, but, without proof or citation, will state what the world has discovered this affection is *not*. It is not sensual abandon; it is not instinctive passion; it is not maudlin sentimentality. Rationality and the purest morality enter into it; without discussing these or other of its elements, I will name that which it seems to me most needs emphasis.

The affection that can give stability to family life, that can cement its members into a unit which shall permit diversity and insist upon freedom—the affection that can do this has in it the quality of exaction.

Viewing one set of relations and their correspondent duties, we are wont to say that, in the ideal family, forgiveness, forbearance, conciliation, is the habitual attitude of each to each. This is the

stand-point occupied by the poet when he sings: "My darling cannot sin beyond my love." Viewing the relations of the family to certain eternal principles of purity and growth, we say the members of a family forgive nothing to each other—*i. e.*, they forgive in one another no abatement of allegiance to these principles. Occupying this stand-point, the German poet exclaims:

"Liebling, nie kannst du erreichen  
Die Befehle meiner Liebe;  
Was mein Ehrgeiz für dich hofft  
Das ist höher als dein Muth."

I believe that the deterioration in this respect, in the idea of affection, is one of the commonest sources of weakness, selfishness, and corruptness of character. Such enervated affection permits the indulgence of the lowest and most unworthy desires of its objects, instead of demanding from them a life on the highest plane of their possibilities. This kind of love betrays itself in the commonest as well as the loftiest affairs of domestic life. This kind of love leads mothers to say, "I know so much candy, chewing-gum, and cigarettes are bad for Johnny, but I love him so I can't bear to cross him by prohibiting their use. I know her present associations are making Nellie vain and idle, but I love her so I can't bear to hurt her feelings about it." This kind of love fills the heart of the maiden who, acknowledging the defective character and the dangerous practices of her lover, adds: "Well, I can't help it—and I love him so that, so long as he loves me, I don't care what he does." This kind of love causes husbands to humor petulance, obstinacy, and unreason in their wives, and causes wives to ignore, or tacitly encourage, little vices in their husbands, both justifying their course on the ground of their great fondness. This is not the quality of love I mean when I speak of affection as the paramount idea in the home. According to the height of one's affection is the depth of one's care for its object, the susceptibility to offence, the capacity for clear-sighted inspection, the duty of deliberate, honest criticism, the demand of noble being and generous doing.

A stranger's defects are matters of indifference to me; an enemy's evil or ignoble act may fill me with complacency, if not a sort of gloating pleasure (because such acts prove him unfit to be

my friend, and reconcile me to his enmity). But what the man, woman, or child of my love, of my closest kin, may do, this is my concern, and my affection is their severest critic. This is the health, this the virtue, and the power of family affection, that it raises an exalted standard of character for its objects, and helps them to attain it by the mere force of its exacting expectations. The counterpart of exaction in the idea of family affection is generosity. Through this quality the home becomes the centre of friendships. That is no ideal home where the husband's friends are not welcomed by the wife and enjoyed by her, where the wife's friends are not greeted by the husband, and where the affections cannot widen for a real inclusion of these new objects. You remember how Charles Sumner's heart was gladdened and surprised by the discovery that the wives of his two most intimate friends (whose marriage he had been at first inclined to regard with a sort of melancholy jealousy) had also, like their husbands, the capacity for (intellectual) genuine friendship. Too often affection in the family is limited to its own members, and the home devoted only to their uses. This type of selfishness is figured in the order for a new carriage given by a young man who stipulated that it was to be just large enough for "me, my wife, and my baby."

The affection in the idea of the home has its necessary quality of exclusion, yet its influence is to increase sympathy with all humanity outside one's home. The family is not an insulated institution, nor can it be insulated without vitiating its character and decreasing its power. The scene of the most intensely personal interests, the arena for personal qualities to meet and grow; it is, however, founded on universal ideas by virtue of which it continues. All currents of motive have access to it, and its life issues into all channels of activity. The attempt to live unto itself is fatal to the single family; it is fatal to the family as an institution.

The affection that warrants permanence to family life is of the quality that lifts for the entrance of new persons, new relations, new interests. It is this quality in family affection which makes possible all the sweet uses of hospitality; not merely the hospitality of lunches, dinners, and lodgings, delightful as these are, but the hospitality which welcomes new ideas and foreign opinions to a sympathetic consideration.

In this brief and necessarily sketchy analysis I have attempted no details. If true principles are once recognized, the details will follow. When the sun shines we do not have to count the candles and be careful about their placing. Once can we perceive the fundamental principles of home life, and act in harmony with them, and the doilies will be of exactly the right size and pattern, pictures will be hung at just the right height, curtains will be draped at precisely the proper curve and angle; all externals will conform to the laws of beauty so soon as all internals have submitted to the laws of health, justice, freedom, activity, and love.

When humanity shall have become so generous, so pure, and so true as to be capable of an affection altogether exacting, which warrants permanence; altogether generous, which secures common interests, yet grants personal freedom and expands to friendship; altogether inspiring, which compels intellectual activity; altogether provident, which guards repose and privacy—then the idea of the home will begin to be realized, and ideal homes will become as common as they now are rare.

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## THE ORACLES OF ZOROASTER.<sup>1</sup>

TRANSLATED BY THOMAS STANLEY, AUTHOR OF "LIVES OF THE PHILOSOPHERS."<sup>2</sup>

### I.—THE MONAD, DUAD, AND TRIAD.

. . . Where the Paternal Monad is. The Monad is enlarged, . . . and generates Two, for the Duad sits by him, and glitters with intellectual sections—both to govern all things and to order every-

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<sup>1</sup> Τὰ τοῦ Ζωροάστρου Λόγια. Known also as *The Chaldean Oracles*. A few of them were first published by Ludovicus Tiletanus at Paris, with the Commentaries of Plethōn, to which were subsequently added those of Psellos. The rest were collected by Franciscus Patricius from the works of Proklos, Hermias, Simplicios, Damaskios, Synesios, Olympiodoros, Nikephoros, and Arnobios, and published, together with the "Hermetic Books," at the end of his *Nova Philosophia*.

Iamblichos has remarked that it was the custom in Egypt to ascribe all sacred writings to Hermes. It would seem that the Assyrian sacerdotal writers were in the practice of crediting their religious compositions to Zoroaster. Hermippos says that there were two million verses, or *gathas*, of this character, which, it is conjectured, were de-